

# Minutes

Talbot County Board of Elections  
215 Bay Street  
Easton, MD 21601  
*November 18, 2020*

## Present:

### **Board**

Joseph Secrist, President	(R)
Walter Black	(D)
Susan MacKinnon	(D)
Richard Bulman	(R)
Wadella Thomas	(R)

### **Staff**

Jeri Cook, Election Director

### **Board Attorney**

Lyndsey Ryan

### **Public**

None

The monthly meeting of the Talbot County Board of Elections was held on November 18, 2020. Due to restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, the meeting was held by videoconference and teleconference. The public was invited to listen by conference call and advised via the Board website and on the agenda of the procedure to do so. Mr. Secrist called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. Mr. Secrist noted that a quorum was present.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Secrist asked if the Board had any corrections or additions to the minutes of the meeting of October 21, 2020, copies of which had been forwarded to the Board Members in advance of the meeting. Ms. Cook noted that under the topic of "Discuss Polling Place evaluations" the last sentence should read "The board will use Early Voting at Easton Firehouse for audits and verification purposes". Mr. Black moved approval of the minutes with this correction. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

## **Addition/Changes to the Agenda**

Mr. Secrist asked if there were any additions to the agenda as published. Ms. Thomas asked that the Board discuss certificates of appreciation for judges under new business. Mr. Bulman asked to add Closed Meeting Minutes of August 19, 2020 under Old Business and Ms. Cook asked that Agenda item 12 be clarified to read "Board of Canvassers for Primary Election. Mr. Bulman moved approval of the agenda with these three changes. Ms. MacKinnon seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

## **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

## **Election Director's Report**

Ms. Cook reported on the following:

- There was about an 82% turnout for the General Election.
- Payroll for the election judges and canvassers has been transmitted to the county. It is quite a bit over budget. Details will be ready for the next Board Meeting.
- Until recently, we have not been sent a bill for rent for the space we occupy at the Talbot County Business Center. The county has in our line item budget \$17,200 for rent. We have now received a bill for rent from the airport in the amount of \$28,662.63 for the fiscal year. No information has been provided as to how it is calculated or that the building is now owned by the airport. Ms. Cook noted that we have no lease for the property because the building was owned by the county which is responsible for providing space for use by the Board of Elections. After discussion, it was the consensus that Ms. Cook should turn the bill over to the county and let them address the payment.
- Ms. Cook will be taking time off in December to use some of the comp time she has accumulated during the election.
- The election has been closed in MDVOTER so the office can now begin processing voter information since close of registration prior to the election.

## **Board Attorney's Report**

Ms. Ryan had nothing to report.

## **Old Business**

- a. Facility for Election Office

Ms. Cook reported that we have been invited to meet with the County Council on February 23, 2021 at 3:45 p.m. to discuss, among other topics, our needs for space.

b. Review Invoices

Ms. Cook previously provided Board Members with copies of invoices received since the last meeting. She responded to questions from Board Members.

c. Budget FY2021

Ms. Cook previously provided reports on expenditures recorded by the county through September. Also provided was a report on expenditures she was aware of up to October. Mr. Secrist noted the amount Talbot County is billed by the State Board appears to be high compared to that of other counties of similar size.

d. County Bulletins

Ms. Cook previously provided County Bulletins that are available to each Board Member. There were no questions from Board Members.

e. Closed Meeting Minutes of August 19, 2020

Mr. Bulman reported that he was concerned that the way the issue of closed meetings was left at the last meeting it may be considered that the Board actually violated the Open Meetings Act. He researched both the Election Law and the Open Meetings Act and reported his conclusion that the Board had not violated the law. He asked the Board Attorney to be prepared at this meeting to provide her opinion.

Ms. Ryan then summarized her research and noted that there is no requirement to enter in closed session when discussing a topic that may be discussed in closed session. She concluded, however, that in this case there was no violation of the Open Meetings Act. She asked that when a Board Member has a matter to discuss in Closed session, the Member discuss it with her in advance.

f. Certificates of Appreciation

Ms. Thomas reminded the Board that following the Primary Election we discussed recognizing Election Judges and Staff for the successful election. At that time, it was agreed that such recognition should be deferred to include recognition of the judges and staff following the General Election in November. The Board discussed various appropriate ways to recognize their work. Following this discuss, Mr. Bulman moved that the Election Board recommend to the County Council the adoption of a Proclamation recognizing the work of the Election Judges and Election Staff for the successful conduct of the Primary and General Elections. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. Ms. MacKinnon agreed to draft a Proclamation, with the assistance of Ms. Ryan, and circulate it to the other Board Members for comment prior to referring it to the County Council for consideration.

## **New Business**

### **a. Review of polling place evaluations**

Ms. MacKinnon performed an evaluation of Early Voting at the Easton Fire House on October 26, 2020. She found no discrepancies. Mr. Secrist performed an evaluation of the Easton Fire House on November 3, 2020. The only discrepancy he noted was that the list of Write In Candidates was not conspicuously posted.

### **Confirmation of the next meeting, Wednesday, December 16, 2020 – 9:30 am.**

Mr. Secrist noted that the next Board Meeting will be on December 16, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. and that we will continue to meet by videoconference.


### **Board of Canvassers convene**

At this point, the Election Board met as the Board of Canvassers. Actions at this meeting were recorded separately.

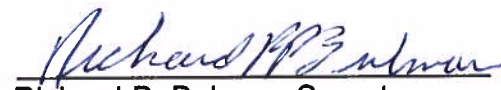
### **Adjournment**

At the conclusion on the meeting of the Board of Canvassers, Mr. Black moved adjournment. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. The meetings adjourned at 10:29 a.m.

Attested,

  
Joseph H. Secrist, Jr., President

Respectfully submitted,

  
Richard B. Bulman, Secretary